APEC 2019 Policy Outcomes - Health

December 2019

2019 WORK PLAN AND THEME

The HWG adopted the 2019 HWG work plan and theme 'Supporting Health across the Life Course' and in 2019, the HWG's mandate was actualized through activities focused on:

- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention;
- Enhanced Access to Care and Services; and,
- Strengthening Health Systems for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Sustainable Development.

KEY 2019 WORK PLAN INITIATIVES

Key initiatives taken in 2019 included:

- Policy Discussion on Immunization in the Asia-Pacific Region which highlighted vaccination as a key pillar of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- APEC Statement on Universal Health Coverage to UN in September 2019 which including wording on the importance of immunization, obesity and healthy ageing.
- Policy Dialogue on 'Health Across the Life Course' which included prevention measures to support an ageing population within APEC economies.
- Continued collaboration with other APEC fora on Mental Health, which included an agreement to develop a forward plan for continued work on mental health post-2020.
- Joint statement of the HWG-LSIF Joint High-Level Meeting. The statement include agreement on the critical importance of promoting healthy ageing in the region, including improving access for older people to the tools needed to age well and continue to learn, grow, make decisions, and actively contribute to society beyond increasing life expectancy.

As an additional output of HLM9, HWG member economies agreed to develop a 'Dementia Spotlight' that compiles initiatives and projects addressing dementia in the Asia-Pacific region.

The 9th High Level meeting on Health and the Economy was held in August and focused on health aging and elderly care.

ABAC WORK ON HEALTH IN 2019

The ABAC Letter to Health Ministers included statement of support for work being done at APEC on the topics of; aging issues, commitment to UHC, impact of climate change on health and cross flora collaboration between Health and Finance ministries.

APEC 2020 Policy Priorities – Health

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APEC

Following on from Chile in 2019, the key health priority Malaysia has decided to focus on in 2020 is 'Promoting Smart Living for Aging Population.'

In 2017, about 10 per cent of the population in APEC was aged 65 and above, and the number will increase to 25 per cent by 2050. The rapidly changing and evolving technology, emergence of disruptive technology, as well as digitalisation have posed challenges for the ageing population to run their daily life. Their health might be at greater risk if they are left to cope with the fast pace of technology without further assistance by younger and able population or necessary hard and soft infrastructure which should be provided by the Government.

In APEC, economies have started to discuss the need for smart living for ageing society through various fora. Economies have agreed on the important role of digital technologies and innovation for ageing society. Despite the current hurdles for them in adopting digitalisation including limited internet access, lack of awareness and inadequate facilitation and design, there is a need for a standardisation in the areas of security, data transfer and communication to support and enhance their living standards .

Realising this need for APEC to work towards embracing smart living for ageing population, Malaysia would like to continue promoting and mainstreaming the cross-cutting efforts. The discussion that will follow through should be holistic and comprehensive, covering areas including smart cities and housing; and nursing care and e-health. The following fora have been identified to champion potential collaboration and initiatives:

i)   Health Working Group (HWG)

ii)   Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI)

iii)   Telecommunications and Information Working Group (TELWG)

iv)   Friends of the Chair (FotC) on Urbanisation

Another avenue for engagement on the health agenda may be through Malaysia's focus on Complementary Indicators beyond the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

2020 NCAPEC POLICY RECOMMEDATIONS FOR MALAYSIA

Malaysia has the opportunity to advance APEC's Heath agenda during its host year. To advance these important priorities in Malaysia's host year, NCAPEC recommends that Malaysia:

- Schedule a 10th "High Level Meeting on Health and the Economy" with the APEC HWG and LSIF to advance the Healthy Asia Pacific 2020 Roadmap.
- Continue to support working level LSIF-RHSC meetings, while also looking at opportunities to schedule another policy dialogue on Innovation, Regulatory Systems, and Convergence.
- Following upon the UNGA's High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, and the Political Declaration of support for UHC approved by the General Assembly, include a discussion on APEC member economies' affirmation of the Political Declaration on UHC and discuss public-private partnerships to achieve UHC in member economies. Considering that human resources for the health industry is a pressing constraint on achieving UHC, APEC members should discuss how member economies will address health workforce shortages, particularly frontline work in Primary Care settings.
- Continue to make antimicrobial resistance (AMR) a high priority issue for discussion at APEC.
- Ensure continued cross-fora dialogue with Health and Finance Officials (and other relevant ministries) as part of the Finance Ministers' Process. Such dialogue should aim to achieve the common goal of proactive investment in healthy workforces by improving the use of government financing and expenditure tools that can lead to more equitable financing of and access to healthcare.
- Continue development and utilization of the *Healthy Women Healthy Economies* toolkit to identify and implement government policies and business practices that advance women's health and well-being to support their economic participation.
- Host the annual forum on Ethical Business Practices to ensure continued progress towards meeting the goals set forth in the Nanjing Declaration.